

Promoting Health in the Grocery Store



In-Store Marketing
Strategies to
Improve Food
and Beverage
Options in Your
Community



Table of Contents

- 3 Introduction**
- 5 Step 1: Strategic Planning and Engagement**
- 7 Step 2: Store Environment Assessment and Community Engagement**
- 9 Step 3: Store Selection and Retailer Engagement**
- 12 Step 4: Retail Strategy Implementation**
- 18 Step 5: Evaluation**
- 20 Step 6: Sustaining Your Program**
- 23 Additional Resources**



Introduction

Overview

CalFresh Healthy Living, federally known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), strives to improve the health of eligible Californians through education and healthy community changes. The California Department of Social Services leads SNAP-Ed implementing agencies and partners to provide low-cost, high-impact strategies for healthy eating support. Since Americans, including SNAP recipients, get most of their food from full-service grocery stores and supercenters,¹ a key priority in encouraging healthy eating must be to work through public-private partnerships to improve grocery store environments and practices.

Product placement, pricing and promotion are forms of in-store marketing that drive consumer purchasing. Increasing the prominence and convenience of healthy foods can be effective strategies for improving nutrition and health, and influencing healthier purchases. By working with retailers to improve product selection and placement, SNAP-Ed implementing agencies can work on changing retail practices and community norms that better support healthy eating for all shoppers.

This guide outlines how to launch a healthy retail program locally and is intended for nutrition staff in local public health departments, cooperative extension offices, and community-based organizations working to improve access to healthy food.

USDA Food and Nutrition Benefits Programs

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in California as CalFresh, increases food purchasing power by providing eligible Californians with monthly benefits that can be used to buy SNAP-approved foods at authorized retail stores. SNAP-Ed teaches budgeting and shopping strategies that stretch CalFresh food dollars and help families put healthy food on the table. For more information about CalFresh, visit the [CalFresh webpage](#).

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) provides pregnant women, breastfeeding moms and children 0-5 with cash value vouchers that can be used to purchase a variety of healthy foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, at authorized WIC vendors. This program provides additional food dollars for tailored healthy food packages that help to establish healthy habits early on in life. For more information, visit the [WIC webpage](#).



Designing a Healthy Retail Program

The food environment influences what people buy and eat. Food stores and food manufacturers use product displays, promotions, prices and store layout to prompt people to purchase particular foods. Food manufacturers and retailers spend \$50 billion dollars annually on in-store advertising to influence consumer choice, yet few retailers use marketing strategies to drive consumers toward healthier options.²

Through a healthy retail program, you can work with supermarkets, small chain grocery stores and neighborhood markets in your community to promote the purchase and consumption of healthier foods and beverages by CalFresh and WIC shoppers.



Step 1: Strategic Planning & Engagement

Overview

Before implementing a program or contacting food retailers, you should take stock of your resources and develop a strategic plan. A key first step for a successful healthy retail program is to assess Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) that may impact your program.

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT framework helps you analyze factors within your community that may bolster or hinder your work. It can help you take advantage of existing resources, identify stakeholders and minimize threats. See Figure 1.

- Identify strengths and weaknesses based on internal organizational factors and your past experiences.
- Identify opportunities and threats that are based on external factors and forward looking.



STRENGTHS

What are you good at?
What are you proud of?
What resources do you have?

WEAKNESSES

What resources do you lack?
What knowledge are you missing?

OPPORTUNITIES

Which other programs in your community might offer support to your program?

THREATS

What factors might negatively impact your program?

Figure 1. SWOT analysis framework

Stakeholder Power Mapping

To gain a better understanding of the stakeholders in your community and their interests, consider creating a power map. A power map is a visual tool that can help you identify the right individuals to engage with early on to build a strong and sustainable program. See Figure 2.

- Write down people, groups or institutions that are likely to support your program.
- If they are supportive and influential community members, place them in the upper right quadrant. If they are less influential, place them in the lower right quadrant.
- Place oppositional groups in the respective left quadrants.
- Make sure to consider youth, parents, colleagues, policymakers, media outlets, retailers, national organizations, etc.

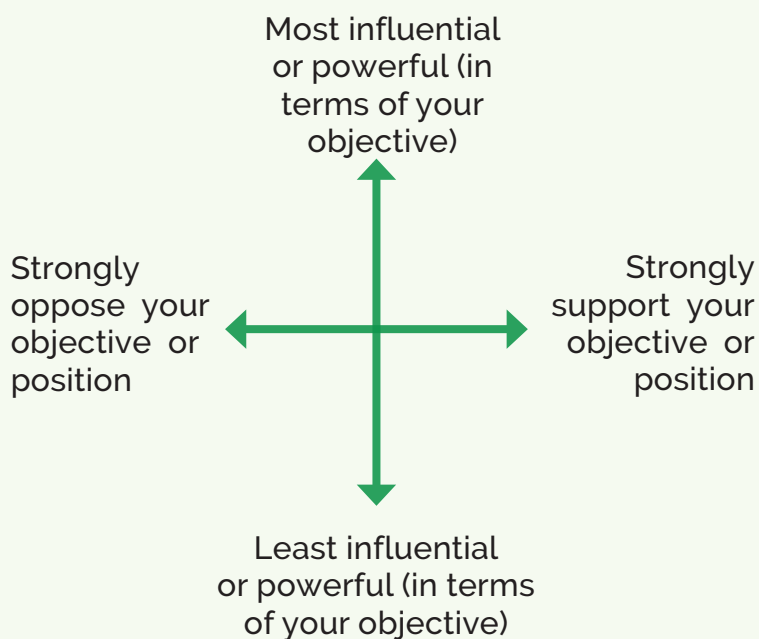


Figure 2. Power map framework

- Identify strong opponents and least influential stakeholders to help you determine who to prioritize and what actions to take. If they do not support or have influence on your program, you may want to simply inform or monitor them rather than engage them.

Collaboration and Partnership

With a better understanding of your program's strengths and needs, as well as a map of stakeholders, connect with local coalitions and organizations doing similar work. County Nutrition Action Partnerships (CNAPs), local obesity coalitions or your local [Food Policy Council \(Directory\)](#) are good places to start. You may also want to connect with tobacco and alcohol use prevention programs. For example, the [Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community campaign](#) is a statewide collaboration between tobacco and alcohol use prevention, sexually transmitted disease prevention and nutrition partners. Their goals are to improve the health of Californians through changes in community stores and to educate people on how in-store product marketing influences the consumption of unhealthy products. Work with partners in your retail program to:

- Develop an implementation strategy.
- Leverage each other's resources.
- Maximize existing coalition's staffing and clout.
- Start your own coalition or subcommittee to focus on retail work.

Step 2: Store Environment Assessment and Community Engagement

A successful healthy retail program educates the public about the role the retail food environment plays in shaping their eating habits and health.

Gathering information on product, pricing, placement and promotion strategies used by food stores in your community is necessary to help retailers improve offerings. This information will serve as a baseline for evaluating healthy retail progress over time. It can also be used to educate community members about the ubiquity of unhealthy food marketing in stores. When gathering this information, engage with residents to understand local food and cultural preferences, and shopping practices.

- Using a [geographic information system \(GIS\)](#), map the locations in low-income neighborhoods where you plan to work. Consider whether your program will include corner stores, convenience stores, grocery stores, supermarkets, warehouse clubs and non-food stores (e.g., hardware stores, pharmacies, etc.).
- Use an assessment tool to collect baseline information about food availability from retail outlets.

Several free tools are available, including:

- » [Site-Level Assessment Questionnaires \(SLAQs\)](#): A California Department of Public Health [Nutrition and Physical Activity Branch](#) tool designed to provide comprehensive annual site assessment data for program planning in retail sites.
- » [Checkout Aisle Assessment \(PDF\)](#): An in-store assessment tool from the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) that assesses the presence and type of food, beverages and non-food merchandise at retail checkout. CSPI provides assessment training and assistance with data analysis.
- » [Calculating Selling Area for Healthy Retail](#): A tool that measures the total selling area of a store, both floor area and shelf space, and calculates the total percentage of selling area devoted to healthy foods.



» **The Nutrition Environment Measures Survey (NEMS):** These tools are observational measures to assess the community and consumer nutrition environments, such as food retail stores. The NEMS store survey has 11 measures that assess the availability and price differences between healthy and less-healthy options.

- Conduct key informant interviews with store managers or owners to learn about healthy retail strategies of interest.
- Conduct shopper surveys or focus groups with community members to learn about healthy food preferences.
- Consider recruiting community members, high school students and university students from local public health, policy, nutrition and registered dietitian programs to help with data collection.
- Disseminate assessment findings through fact sheets, social media and op-eds in your local newspaper.

A. Store Information:

1. LHD: _____ 2. Data Collector: _____ (name) (email)

3. Store Name: _____ 4. Site ID*: _____

5. Address: _____

6. Length of CalFresh Healthy Living involvement at this site: ____ year(s) ____ month(s)

7. Date of current assessment: ____ / ____ / ____ 8. Reporting for FFY: ____ - ____

9. Date of last assessment: ____ / ____ / ____ N/A - this is the first year of assessment

10. How many registers does this store have? ____

11. Does the store currently accept...
 a) WIC? Yes No CalFresh (food stamps/SNAP/EBT)? Yes No

B. Product Placement*:

Entrance*:

1. Which products are placed near the entrance to the store (don't include checkout area or aisle end-caps):
 a) Produce bins: Yes No
 b) Water: Yes No
 c) Other healthy foods or beverages: Yes No ; describe: _____
 d) Sugary drinks: Yes No
 e) Alcohol/tobacco: Yes No
 f) Other unhealthy food/beverage: Yes No ; describe: _____

Check-out*:

2. Does this store have...? One line for multiple registers (count as 1 in table below) Individual checkout lines

3. Record the # of checkout lines that display the following in column on right:

	# of checkouts
Healthy options displayed: (2 point each)	
a) Have fruits and vegetables, fresh or processed, no added sugar	
b) Have bottled water (sparkling, still, plain or flavored, no added caffeine or colors/artificial sweeteners)	
c) Have other healthy foods/beverages (e.g. nuts, seeds, 100% juice, plain milk, baked chips, etc.); Describe: _____	
d) 50% or more of checkout line space is used for either healthy or non-food/bev items	
Unhealthy options displayed: (2 point for each checkout without menu)	
a) Have sugary drinks (e.g. regular soda, energy drinks, sports drinks, lemonade, sweetened tea, etc.)	
b) Have alcohol/tobacco products	
c) Have other unhealthy foods or beverages (e.g. candy, chips, ice cream, etc.); Describe: _____	
d) More than 25% of checkout line space is used for unhealthy items	
RECORD THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CHECKOUT LINES HERE:	


4. Are any of the checkouts designated as healthy or family-friendly?
 Yes No; how many: ____ One More than 6 (End caps)

5. Are any of the healthy/family-friendly checkouts open? Yes No

CalFresh Healthy Living Food Retail SLAQ, revised August 2020
 UC ANR Nutrition Policy Institute

Sample SLAQ Survey

**Nutrition Environment Measures Survey (NEMS)
 Food Outlet Cover Page**

 Rater ID:

Store ID: Restaurant ID:

Grocery Store
 Convenience Store
 Other: _____

Secondary Store Type (if applicable):
 Not Applicable
 Drugstore or pharmacy
 Ethnic food store
 Corner store
 General merchandise store (Target, WalMart, etc)
 Big box store (Sam's Club, Costco, etc)

Date: / / Start Time: : : AM PM
 End Time: : : AM PM
 Number of cash registers:

Fast Food
 Fast Casual
 Sit Down
 Specialty:
 Other: _____

Site Visit Date: / /
 Start Time: : : AM PM
 End Time: : : AM PM

Menu/Internet Review Date: / /
 Start Time: : : AM PM
 End Time: : : AM PM

Other Visit/Interview Date: / /
 Start Time: : : AM PM
 End Time: : : AM PM

Comments: _____

**Nutrition Environment Measures Survey (NEMS)
 Cover Page**

© 2009 Center for Health Behavior Research, University of Pennsylvania
 URL: www.chbr.org 5426

Sample NEMS Survey



Step 3: Store Selection and Retailer Engagement

Based on the results of your strategic planning and store assessments, determine which retailers to approach. You might start with stores located in low-income neighborhoods that have the fewest healthy offerings or stores that have already made some healthy changes and might be interested in doing more. It is important to know early on about the store's operating health and risk factors before investing time and resources. You may want to examine business "health" before working with a store. Here are some factors to consider:

- General attrition rate of store owners is a problem.
- Store owners may sell or shut down the store due to low sales, high rents and other costs.
- Some stores may have been cited with fines and fees.
- Stores with major violations of tobacco, alcohol, signage, health or labor laws in the past year may not be able to support a healthy retail initiative.

Establishing Retail Partnerships

When initially approaching a retailer, it is important to decide on the most appropriate mode of communication. Email may work best for a supermarket chain, while a letter or phone call may be more appropriate for small, independently owned markets. Once you have made initial contact, you may find that in-person store visits are helpful for relationship building.

While some store owners may be motivated to make changes for public health reasons, their decisions are still largely based on revenue. Be sure to pitch them on why healthy retail is a good business opportunity as it is aligned with market trends and consumer interests. For effective communication with store owners, use the [Healthy Checkout: Good for Business, Good for Customers fact sheet \(PDF\)](#) from CSPI for talking points on promoting healthier options. Also, refer to the [Establishing Partnerships with Food Retailers brief \(PDF\)](#) from North Carolina Growing Together for initial discussion topics with retailers.



Because chain stores may require that all outlets have the same look and feel, you may need to plan for additional staff time to navigate this added layer of approval. In contrast, when working with small markets, program staff may have direct access to store owners.

During initial meetings, encourage the retailer to participate, explore the scope of the program and agree upon a set of healthy retail strategies to implement. Clarify roles, responsibilities, planned activities and a timeline. You might consider drafting a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for you and the store owner to sign that outlines the details of your agreement. CSPI offers a [model MOU \(PDF\)](#) that can be adapted to fit your needs.

You will want to consider the type of store setting and should know that effective healthy retail strategies may differ slightly for stores depending on the store type, such as full-service grocery stores and small stores like corner markets.



Grocery Stores

Grocery stores are full-service food retailers that offer a wide selection of foods and beverages, including fresh foods such as produce, meats and dairy products. They can be independently owned or chain operated. They can range in size from specialty markets to medium-sized stores to large supermarkets or warehouse clubs. Chain stores may require additional approvals from the regional or corporate level prior to participating in your program.

Small Stores

Small stores include corner stores, convenience stores, tiendas, bodegas, general stores, dollar stores, small markets and gas stations. These stores can be independently owned or chain operated. They are typically less than 5,000 square feet and may have limited produce and other healthy foods. Small stores usually need help with stocking healthier products.

Focusing on increasing ready-to-eat healthy foods is a smart strategy, although small stores may need licenses to sell prepared foods. Partners and government organizations can help them obtain licenses. Fixtures, such as refrigeration and shelving, are also common needs for small stores. Stores can consider working with Community Development Financial Institutions and microlenders to secure needed equipment.

According to a survey released in January 2018 by NACS, a global association dedicated to advancing convenience retailing, 61% of convenience store retailers reported sales gains in better-for-you items like fruits, vegetables, yogurt, nuts and health bars.³

Reach and Impressions

SNAP benefits can be redeemed at SNAP-authorized retailers, including supermarkets, super-centers, grocery stores, convenience stores, corner stores and farmers' markets. Most SNAP dollars are spent in large format stores. A 2015 USDA report states that about 90% of benefits and two out of every three SNAP transactions occur at supermarkets and supercenters.⁴

Smaller stores, like corner and convenience stores, may have more flexibility to make changes, but they account for just 1% of food sales and contribute to only 11% of SNAP participants' calories.¹ Large grocery stores and supermarkets provide more than 60% of Americans' calories, including for low-income shoppers (see Figure 3).¹ Changes in these larger stores will have the greatest impact.

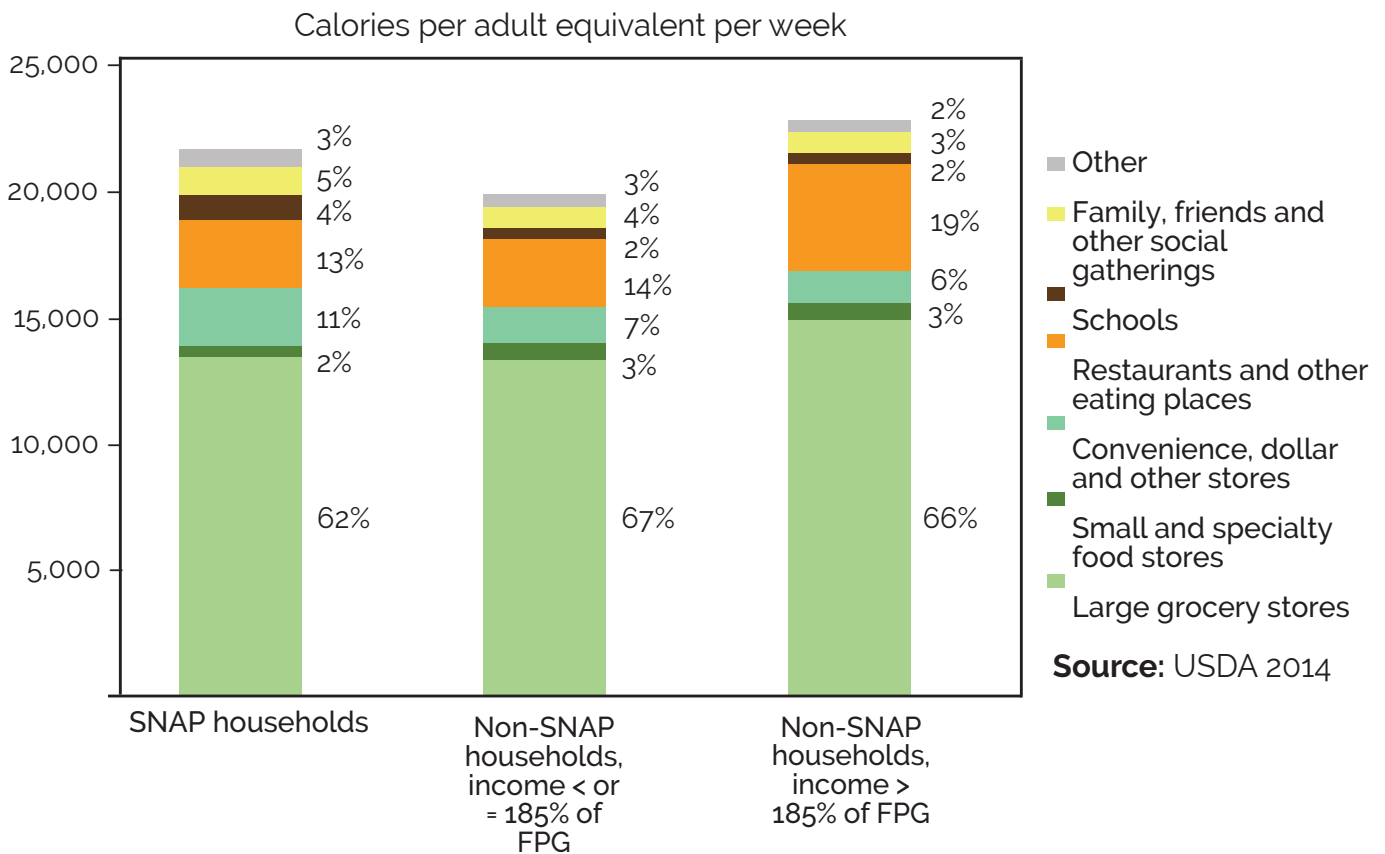


Figure 3. Sources of calories by venue and income level

Step 4: Retail Strategy Implementation

When determining which healthy retail strategies to implement, consider the “4 P’s of marketing”: product, placement, price and promotion. Offer a range of healthy marketing options to the store manager or owner that touch on these four elements, and engage with them on what changes they are willing to make. Your organization can provide technical assistance around procurement, healthy item identification, nutrition standards and nutrition education to supplement these marketing strategies. Retailers often benefit from basic nutrition education to understand the relationship between healthy food and chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease and various forms of cancer. In turn, store owners can become better advocates for their customers’ health.

Product

Work with retailers to identify and offer products that consumers want to buy to avoid any revenue loss. You can help the store increase its healthy product inventory in a variety of ways:

- Engage with customers through focus groups, intercept surveys, or comment cards to understand preferences and purchasing habits.
- Work with store managers to identify healthier options and speak with their food distributors about procuring those healthier products.
- Suggest that stores offer convenient grab-and-go meal and snack options, such as meal kits, soup kits, salad kits and healthy snack packs.
- Provide store owners with technical assistance on stocking healthier foods and beverages, and encourage them to adopt nutrition standards/ criteria that align with the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) and [USDA’s MyPlate](#).



Placement

How products are placed in stores impacts what people see and purchase. Strategically placing healthy options in prominent locations throughout a store can promote healthier purchases.

- Set up eye-catching displays of healthy food items, such as baskets stacked neatly with fresh produce.
- Designate one or more aisles as healthy checkout lanes (see Figure 4).
- Stock healthy foods and beverages at checkout, on end-of-aisle and free-standing displays, at eye level on shelves and in other prominent locations throughout the store.
- Cross-promote healthy products throughout the store. For example, pair bananas and peanut butter in the produce department or carrot and celery sticks near the refrigerated hummus.
- Remove unhealthy (high-sugar, high-fat) items, especially those with characters on the package, from children's eye level.

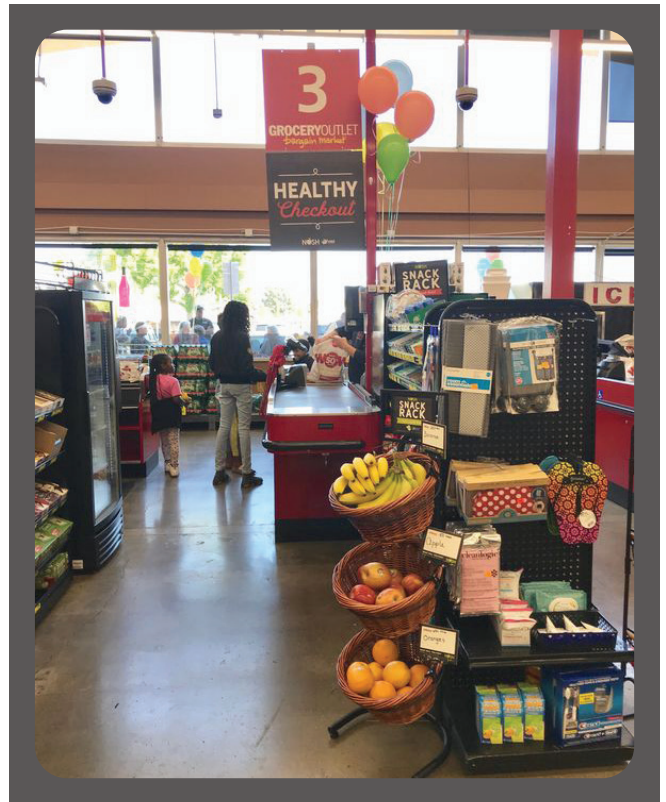


Figure 4. Images of hanging signs pointing customers to the healthy checkout aisle and fruit displayed neatly in baskets near checkout, encouraging shoppers to make healthy purchases.



Improving Food and Beverage Offerings at Checkout

Improving the nutritional quality of foods and beverages sold at checkout is an important strategy to change snacking norms and reduce exposure to unhealthy food marketing in retail food stores.

Checkout is an area of the store that every shopper must pass through, and 90% of the foods offered there are of poor nutritional value.⁵ Half of shoppers make impulse purchases in the checkout aisle, and three-fourths of them regret it.⁶

Replacing checkout offerings like candy, soda and chips with healthier options like fruit, nuts and seltzer water is one way to support healthy food choices.



Several communities have successfully partnered with retailers to implement healthy checkout aisles:

In 2016, parents in Los Angeles worked with community and public health groups to approach Northgate Gonzalez, a family-owned traditional Mexican grocery store, and asked them to remove unhealthy foods from their checkout lanes. Northgate Gonzalez now has healthy checkout lanes in 10 stores, with plans to expand to all 41 stores.

In 2017, through a partnership with the Utah Department of Health and Intermountain Healthcare, Associated Food Stores implemented Live Well Lanes in all 43 stores across Utah. These lanes feature only fresh fruit and dietitian-approved snacks. An evaluation found that sales of healthy items in these lanes increased by 49%.⁷

Price

Price is a driving force behind consumers' food purchasing decisions. Ensure that healthy products are competitively priced and affordable.

- Advise stores on how they can accept CalFresh and/or WIC.
 - Incentivize customers to spend CalFresh benefits on nutritious foods and beverages.
 - Use store coupons or other promotions for fruit and vegetable, whole grain, lower sodium and low-fat dairy purchases.
 - Price healthier versions of products lower than less healthy versions (e.g., whole wheat bread cheaper than white bread).
 - Offer specials to promote healthy products, such as "Buy 1, Get 1 Free."
 - Run specials on healthy foods and beverages through customer loyalty cards.
 - Promote student or senior discounts on healthy products.
 - Align price promotion specials on seasonal produce with [Harvest of the Month](#) education.
- Offer nutrition information on shelf signs throughout the store.
 - Place educational materials or recipe cards near fresh fruits and vegetables.
 - Promote seasonal fruits and vegetables with retail signs, such as Harvest of the Month signs.
 - Offer special events to promote healthy foods, such as taste tests and cooking demonstrations.
 - Promote sales and specials for healthy foods in weekly circulars and on social media.
 - Use promotional event displays to market healthy snacks, such as back-to-school displays stocked with whole-grain, low-sodium products.
 - Let the community know about the healthy changes in the store through:
 - Local news, TV and radio
 - Community-based organizations
 - Schools and youth-serving organizations
 - Online neighborhood groups, such as Yahoo! Groups and Nextdoor
 - Social media, such as Facebook, Instagram and X.

Promotion

Marketing and promotional materials can increase shoppers' awareness and selection of healthier foods.

- Display posters, freezer clings, shelf signs and recipes promoting healthy foods and beverages.
- Replace exterior and interior ads for high-fat, high-sugar items with promotions of fruits, vegetables and other healthy items.

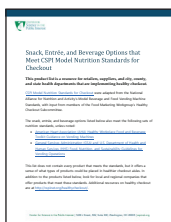


Healthy retail strategies can differ for large and small stores. Please refer to *Step 3: Store Selection and Retailer Engagement* for descriptions of store types. There are activities that may be more effective depending on the type of store setting. For example, stocking only healthy items on end of aisle shelves or promoting healthy products in store circulars can work in a grocery store, whereas, small stores can benefit from exterior marketing or organizing a store cleanup day to attract customers by promoting the store's availability of healthy foods. The table below highlights prominent in-store promotions.

Table 1. In-Store Marketing Strategies

PRODUCT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Offer a healthy meal or snack section with convenient grab-and-go options, such as meal, soup and salad kits, and snack packs. » Identify healthier options and work with food distributors to procure healthier products. » Provide advice on WIC and SNAP acceptance to increase product inventory.
PLACEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Designate one or more aisles or end caps as healthy and replace high-sugar items with fruits, nuts and water. » If store does not have checkout lanes, stock healthy foods and beverages near the register. » Cross-promote healthy products throughout the store by pairing produce with a healthy grocery item. For example: strawberries and oatmeal or celery and canned tuna.
PRICING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Use digital platforms, like apps or store websites for the promotion of healthy product discounts. » Implement or use an existing loyalty or rewards program to promote the purchase of healthy foods—for example, a frequent shopper card or a punch card. » Price healthier products lower than unhealthy ones. » Participate in produce incentive programs, like “Double Up Food Bucks.” » Offer coupons, price discounts, two-for-one-deals and other sales.
PROMOTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Use in-store signage, posters, recipes and free-standing or end-of-aisle displays to promote healthy foods and beverages. » Give food demonstrations. » Educate staff on nutrition topics and healthy store products. » Give store tours to highlight the availability of healthy items. » Advertise healthy options in store circulars. » Replace exterior marketing for unhealthy foods and beverages with marketing for healthy products. » Organize the store to promote healthy items. » Promote water with materials and displays.

Additional Retail Strategy Implementation Resources From Center for Science in the Public Interest



[Snack, Entree and Beverage Options That Meet CSPI Model Nutrition Standards for Checkout \(PDF\)](#)

A list of products that can be sold in healthy checkout lanes.



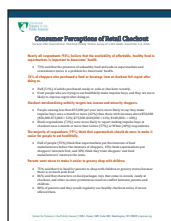
[Sugar Overload: Retail Checkout Promotes Obesity \(PDF\)](#)

A one-page fact sheet about the prevalence and healthfulness of products sold at checkout.



[Temptation at Checkout: The Food Industry's Sneaky Strategy for Selling More](#)

This report examines why it is so difficult to eat well in America and how retail marketing influences food choices.



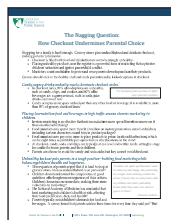
[Poll: Consumer Perceptions of Retail Checkout \(PDF\)](#)

A two-page fact sheet of results from a nationally representative poll.



[Rigged: Supermarket Shelves for Sale \(PDF\)](#)

This report reveals how food companies get their products featured in particular locations in supermarkets.



[The Nagging Question: How Checkout Undermines Parental Choice \(PDF\)](#)

A two-page fact sheet about how the placement of unhealthy foods and beverages in grocery stores can undermine parents' efforts to feed their children well.

Step 5: Evaluation

It is important to assess the impact of healthy retail changes by gathering information before and after any changes. Strategies suggested in Step 2: Store Environment Assessment and Community Engagement section can be repeated so that there is pre- and post-data to assess. You can survey or interview customers about the effects of healthy food promotions on their shopping patterns. Providing small incentives may help to increase survey participation.

Retailers are generally reluctant to share sales data because of concerns that their competitors could use the data to gain an advantage. To encourage their participation, you can assure retailers that their data will not be published with identifying information and will only be reported as community aggregates. You can also interview store managers and owners about any changes to sales or business practices after implementing the healthy retail strategies. When assessing individual and environmental store changes, conduct pre- and post- surveys, and/or include comparison stores for a more robust evaluation.

Evaluation Methods	
Individual Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Consumer surveys » Store manager surveys » Focus groups
Environmental Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » SLAQ » Checkout aisle assessment » Healthy selling area » Sales tracking » Nutrition environment measures survey » Before and after photos

Table 2. Evaluation Methods



It can be difficult to gather reliable sales data from small food retailers because small stores do not collect sales data consistently and very few separate sales data into categories that public health program staff are interested in, such as fruits and vegetables. But you can help small stores track sales data in several ways. A list of sales data tracking methods is available in the [Tracking Healthy Food Sales infographic \(PDF\)](#). ChangeLab Solutions developed this resource to help public health advocates select a method that will work for small stores participating in a healthy food retail program.

Additional evaluation strategies include suggestion boxes in the retail store to collect feedback from shoppers, handing out short feedback surveys at checkout (e.g., handout cards asking which of the following items they would like to see sold in the store), conducting focus groups with consumers, and taking before and after photos.



Checkout Area - Before



Checkout Area - After

Step 6: Sustaining Your Program

After you've started a healthy retail program in your community, you must turn your attention toward sustaining the program. There are a few different strategies to ensure program longevity.

Store Commitments

You can develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with retailers in which retailers commit to certain healthy retail changes. You can also encourage stores to adopt policies outlining their healthy retail commitments, ensuring internal consensus from staff and management.

Incentives

Work with partners and government organizations to establish an incentive program that motivates retailers to promote more nutritious and fewer unhealthy foods and beverages. Incentives could reduce the financial burden for participating retailers in obtaining operating licenses and permits, and/or could help offset the cost of equipment like refrigeration and shelving. Some private industries also may offer rebates for energy efficient upgrades.

Economic development agencies can

provide small business development services and training opportunities for store owners as incentives for participating in healthy retail efforts. They also coordinate several business assistance programs, including façade improvement programs and competitive grant or loan programs, and can give retailers priority access to them as incentives.

Store Highlight

Raley's, a Northern California food retail chain, has made several changes at stores to promote health and wellness. Changes include eliminating their private label brand soda that contained high-fructose corn syrup, offering free fruit to children, launching a personalized customer health program called "Let's Begin," changing to tobacco-free stores, pledging to reduce candy at checkout by 25% and, most recently, committing to reduce unhealthy marketing in the cereal aisle. Raley's has been able to sustain these changes and begin new efforts through support from their CEO and management.



Regulations, Ordinances and Policies

Another way to sustain a healthy retail program is to require stores to stock healthy foods and beverages. Policies can be established at the federal, state or local level. For example, local governments can pass a healthy retail ordinance that requires food retailers to stock a minimum amount of healthy foods or adhere to a specific set of healthy retail criteria to receive a business permit or license. Working with partners, residents and advocates can help to establish which approach may work best.

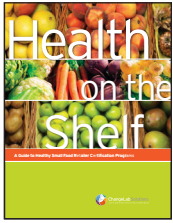
Because policies affect all retailers in a city or county, they can have a broader reach than voluntary commitments. For example, in 2008, Minneapolis adopted a healthy food retailer licensing law that requires stores with a grocery license to carry a certain amount and variety of healthy staple foods.

Business Plan

Stocking healthier foods may require changing existing business practices to increase and maintain profits. Store owners may need support in sourcing healthy products, and managing and merchandising fresh produce. They may need training to negotiate favorable terms with suppliers and to ensure the most profitable product mix. You can provide stores with business assistance to help them successfully transition to a healthy business model. Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) can assist with business operations and connect stores with local business advisors. For more information, visit the [SBDC directory](#).



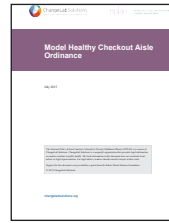
ADDITIONAL PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY RESOURCES



[Health on the Shelf: A Guide to Healthy Small Food Retailer Certification Programs](#)

ChangeLab Solutions

The toolkit can be used by public health agencies and private community-based organizations interested in starting a certification program at the local level. It describes how to create a strong small food retailer certification program that requires stores to make a variety of healthy changes.



[Model Healthy Checkout Aisle Ordinance](#)

ChangeLab Solutions

This resource provides model policy language that can be tailored to the needs of an individual community. The model policy requires retail stores to provide healthy checkout aisles for consumers.



[Minimum Stocking Levels and Marketing Strategies of Healthful Foods for Small Retail Food Stores \(PDF\)](#)

Healthy Eating Research

This report identifies basic minimum stocking levels for healthy foods and beverages in small retail food stores and provides marketing strategies that stores can adopt to enhance the sales of healthy foods and beverages. It can be used by public health agencies and community-based organizations implementing healthy retail programs.

Additional Resources

If you are looking for further assistance with healthy retail, consider these in-depth toolkits available from partner organizations.



[Healthier Food Retail Action Guide](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The primary audience for this toolkit is state-level public

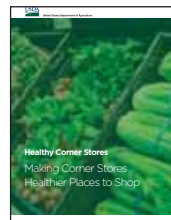
health practitioners working in nutrition and obesity prevention. The guide is organized by public health roles and includes information to facilitate partnerships, conduct assessments, provide technical assistance, and coordinate local public health and community work.



[Healthy Retail Playbook](#) ChangeLab Solutions

This tool is designed for local public health departments, community-based organizations and local elected officials working on nutrition,

alcohol and tobacco control. The playbook includes 15 strategies to improve the retail food environment.



[Healthy Corner Stores Guide](#)

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

This guide can be used by community-based organizations and public health

staff to lay the groundwork for planning and implementing a successful healthy corner store program.



[Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy](#) University of Missouri Extension

University of Missouri Extension offers two separate guides.

The guide for retailers includes information to identify healthy food items, guidelines for handling and storing produce, tips for displaying and merchandising healthy inventory, strategies for profiting from healthy food sales, and ideas for promotion and marketing.

The guide for communities includes best practices for forming a community network, strategies for partnering with and promoting healthy stores, and tips for providing community outreach and education.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS REPORT

[Brown·Miller Communications, Inc.](#)

[California Department of Social Services](#)

[Center for Science in the Public Interest](#)

[Public Health Institute's Center for Wellness and Nutrition](#)

REFERENCES

1. ChangeLab Solutions: Toward a Sustainable Model for Small-Scale Healthy Food Retail. August 2013. https://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/HCS%20Symposium%20Brief_FINAL_20130904.pdf.
2. Checkout Polling: Online Survey of 1,024 adults. Princeton, NJ: Caravan ORC International, December 1–4, 2016.
3. C-store Retailers Predict Emerging Trends for 2018. (Jan. 2, 2018) Convenience Store News. <https://csnews.com/c-store-retailers-predict-emerging-trends-2018>.
4. Cowley D. “LiVe Well Lanes Visited 8 Million Times Since Opening in Utah Grocery Stores.” EIN Presswire. July 20, 2017. http://www.einnews.com/pr_news/393294423/live-welllanes-visited-8-million-times-since-opening-in-utah-grocery-stores.
5. Fielding-Singh P, Almy J, Wootan MG. Sugar Overload: Retail Checkout Promotes Obesity. Washington, DC: Center for Science in the Public Interest; 2014. <https://cspinet.org/sites/default/files/attachment/sugaroverload.pdf>.
6. Mancino L, Guthrie J. Supermarkets, Schools, and Social Gatherings: Where Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Other U.S. Households Acquire Their Foods Correlates with Nutritional Quality. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service; 2018.
7. Most U.S. Households Do Their Main Grocery Shopping at Supermarkets and Supercenters Regardless of Income. (August 3, 2015). <https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2015/august/most-us-households-do-their-main-grocery-shopping-at-supermarkets-and-supercenters-regardless-of-income/>.
8. Rivlin G. Rigged: Supermarket Shelves for Sale. Washington, DC: Center for Science in the Public Interest; 2016. https://cspinet.org/sites/default/files/attachment/Rigged%20report_0.pdf.

Funded by USDA SNAP, an equal opportunity provider. Visit CalFreshHealthyLiving.org for healthy tips.